

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-12. (canceled)

13. (previously presented) Floating lowering and lifting device (1) comprising a floating structure (2) and a lifting unit (3) lowerable from the floating structure (2) towards the sea bed, the lifting unit (3) having a chamber (5) with a least one gas-inlet opening (9) in its wall and a gas supply means (13,32) connected to the gas-inlet opening (9), the device (1) comprising a control element (14,15) for controlling a gas supply rate to the chamber (5), the chamber comprising a releasable coupling member (7) for attaching to a load,

characterized in that, the lifting unit (3) is attached to the floating structure (2) in a non-rigid manner, the chamber (5) comprising at least one equalization opening (23, 25) being fluid communication with the environment outside of the chamber, the control element (14,15) being adapted to supply gas to the chamber for compensating gas volume loss at increasing depth of the lifting unit (3) below sea level and to release air from the chamber after depositing a load onto the sea bed.

14. (previously presented) Floating lowering and lifting device (1) according to claim 13, the gas inlet opening

(9) during use being situated higher up along a longitudinal height of the lifting unit (3) than the equalization opening (23,25).

15. (previously presented) Floating lowering and lifting device (1) according to claim 13, wherein the gas supply elements (13) are placed on the floating structure (2), a fluid supply duct (11) connecting the gas supply elements (13) to the chamber (5).

16. (previously presented) Floating lowering and lifting device (1) according to claim 14, the gas inlet opening (9) during use being situated higher up along a longitudinal height of the lifting unit (3) than the equalization opening (23,25).

17. (previously presented) Floating lowering and lifting device (1) according to claim 14, wherein the gas supply means (13) comprises a container with a compressed gas, the control element (15) comprising a valve connected to the fluid supply duct (11), or a compressor (16), the control means comprising a power control (14) operatively associated with the compressor (16).

18. (previously presented) Floating lowering and lifting device (1) according to claim 13, wherein the gas supply elements comprise a container (32) connected to the chamber via a controllable valve (31), the container comprising a compressed

gas and being lowerable with the chamber, the control elements (33) being connected to the valve (31) for controlling the gas supply to the chamber (5).

19. (previously presented) Floating lowering and lifting device (1) according to claim 14, wherein the gas supply elements comprise a container (32) connected to the chamber via a controllable valve (31), the container comprising a compressed gas and being lowerable with the chamber, the control elements (33) being connected to the valve (31) for controlling the gas supply to the chamber (5).

20. (previously presented) Floating lowering and lifting device (1) according to claim 13, wherein the chamber (5) is suspended from the floating structure (2) via a guide cable (29).

21. (previously presented) Floating lowering and lifting device (1) according to claim 13, the chamber (5) comprising at least one thruster (17) powered via the control line.

22. (previously presented) Floating lowering and lifting device (1) according to claim 13, wherein the chamber (5) comprises a closed compartment (34).

23. (previously presented) Floating lowering and lifting device (1) according to claim 13, wherein the guide cable

(29) or control line is connected to a sheave at one end of an arm (43), which is suspended from the floating structure (2), a counterweight (44) attached to an other end of the arm (43).

24. (previously presented) Floating lowering and lifting device (11) according to claim 13, having a gas release mechanism (21) connected to a control means which is adapted to open the gas release mechanism after placing the load on the sea bed, prior to detaching the releasable coupling member (7).

25. (previously presented) Method of raising and lowering an object (8) from the seabed comprising the steps of:

- attaching a load (8) to the lifting unit (3) according to claim 13;

- adding or releasing a gas into or from the chamber (5) in dependence of the water depth while maintaining an open connection of the chamber with the sea via the equalization opening (23,25).

26. (previously presented) Method according to claim 25, wherein upon depositing the load (8) onto the seabed gas is released from the chamber (5) to maintain a substantially predetermined buoyancy when the weight of the load is transferred from the lifting unit to the seabed.

27. (new) Floating lowering and lifting device according to claim 13, wherein the lifting unit (3) is attached

to the floating structure (2) by an elongated member that is flexible along its length.

28. (new) Floating lowering and lifting device according to claim 27, wherein said elongated member is a cable wound on and unwound from a reel.

29. (new) Floating lowering and lifting device according to claim 13, said control element being connected to said lifting unit by a flexible air supply line.

30. (new) Floating lowering and lifting device according to claim 29, and an air hose reel (12) on which said flexible air supply line is wound.

31. (new) Floating lowering and lifting device according to claim 13, wherein said chamber (5) is in continuous fluid communication with the environment outside the chamber.